

NEWS RELEASE

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Date: November 10, 2005
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30-DAY COMMENT PERIOD BEGINS FOR SAGINAW HILL CLEAN UP PLAN BLM SCHEDULES PUBLIC MEETING

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has announced a 30-day public comment period for the Draft Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis (EE/CA) for the Saginaw Hill clean up project. The comment period begins on November 14, 2005, and ends on December 14, 2005. The Draft EE/CA is available for review at the BLM Tucson Field Office, 12661 E. Broadway, Tucson, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.; and at the Tucson/Pima County Public Library at 6855 W. Mark Road, Tucson, during library hours. A summary of the Draft EE/CA is available online at www.E&E.com or www.blm.gov

In addition, the BLM's Tucson Field Office will host a public meeting on Monday, November 28, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Harriet Johnson Primary School, located at 6060 S. Joseph Ave., Tucson, to present the Draft EE/CA and answer questions or comments. The report includes a comprehensive review of the history of the area, details of the testing of the soils and groundwater, and a description of the alternatives that could be implemented to achieve the goal of making the area safe for the public.

"We hope the public will bring any questions to the public meeting so we can have a productive discussion about the plans for cleaning up this area," said Patrick Madigan, Tucson Field Office Manager. "Our primary goal is to select the best alternative that will make the area safe to the public"

The Saginaw Hill site consists of two areas -- the abandoned Saginaw Mine and Palo Verde Mine. These areas are situated within a 540-acre parcel of land managed by the BLM located 10 miles southwest of Tucson. Mining activities occurred at the site from the late 1800s through the mid-1900s. The mine tailings, waste rock, and slag left over from mining and processing the ore present a concern for human health and the environment, primarily as a source of metal contamination from lead and arsenic.

The BLM has conducted site investigations to characterize the source, nature, and extent of contamination associated with abandoned mines. Information obtained through the site characterization allowed the BLM to formulate clean up alternatives to minimize or eliminate the potential release of any contaminants that would present a risk to human health and the environment.

The BLM has fenced and closed to the public 290 acres of the site to further ensure the public's safety. In addition, 27 mine shafts that presented physical hazards were filled early in 2005.